



# DHSS OFFICE OF DENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER MONTHLY MISSOURI ORAL HEALTH UPDATE

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## Oral Health and Its Connection to Well-Being



Would it surprise you to learn that exceptional oral health leads to an improved quality of life and enhanced functionality? Confidence in communicating, smiling, laughing, smelling and eating are all results of good oral health. Maintaining adequate oral health involves visiting the dentist twice a year, brushing your teeth twice daily, flossing, using mouthwash, and drinking fluoridated water. While 78% of Missourians believe that straight, bright teeth are advantageous in life, one in four adults avoid smiling due to the condition of their mouth and teeth. Ensuring that you book two dental appointments yearly is crucial for boosting your confidence and maintaining overall well-being. Scheduling appointments first thing in the morning can help avoid delays that may prevent you from seeing your dentist later in the year. Resources for locating a suitable dentist, addressing financial barriers, and obtaining transportation can be found using the link below.

<https://health.mo.gov/living/families/oralhealth/low-cost.php>

## The Impact Nicotine Pouches Have on Oral Health

Research reveals that the growing popularity of new nicotine products, such as oral nicotine pouches, is raising concerns about periodontal disease. Nicotine products often contain traces of formaldehyde and metals, which contribute to adverse health effects. Chewing tobacco, a closely related product to oral nicotine pouches, can also result in severe attachment loss and gum recession, underscoring the detrimental effects of nicotine on gum health.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Tobacco Quitline offers free nicotine gum and patches to qualifying Missourians. The Quitline also provides a free "quit kit" to all smokers and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays. Learn more about the Missouri Tobacco Quit Services at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or view the link below.

<https://missouri.quitlogix.org/>



## SmileSquad: A Children's Oral Health E-Learning Platform

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among children. The Children's Oral Health E-Learning Platform, SmileSquad, consists of a set of interactive gaming tools provided by oral health professionals. This platform includes modules designed for grades Pre-K through 5 and grades 6 through 8. The informal learning materials are best utilized during a child's free time. Teachers can impart basic oral health knowledge by implementing the tool as an option for students to use during indoor recess or computer dexterity practice. Parents may also find the SmileSquad narration of this game helpful when introducing the basics of oral health and teeth brushing to young children at home.

<https://cohhelp.mcd.org/>

**SMILESQUAD**

## Tap Water vs Bottled Water

Bottled water often lacks adequate levels of fluoride, a mineral that aids in oral health, and some brands do not contain any fluoride at all. Fortunately, tap water typically provides a sufficient amount. Fluoride is safe and remains the most cost-effective and efficient method to reduce tooth decay, with individuals consuming fluoridated water experiencing 20 to 40 percent less tooth decay. "[My Water's Fluoride](#)," is a resource that displays fluoride levels in drinking water for each county.



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